

Management report to Council

Agenda item 6.3

Council

Urban Forest Fund Round 2 Grant Program 2018

26 March 2019

Presenter: Deb Cailes, Manager Urban Sustainability

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the status of the Urban Forest Fund Round 1 Grant Program, and to seek Council approval for allocation of funding for the Urban Forest Fund Round 2 Grant Program offered in 2018.
2. Endorsed in June 2016, the Urban Forest Fund (the Fund) was established to accelerate greening across the city. The Fund is a co-funding initiative that accepts contributions from external stakeholders, and provides financial support to enable the delivery of greening projects that are not funded by Council's existing programs.
3. The Fund encourages greening via an annual matched funding grants program for greening projects on private property, such as green roofs, green open space and tree planting. The first round of grants was awarded in December 2017, with three projects endorsed for funding.
4. Confidential information about applications and applicants has not been included in this report.

Key issues

5. A total of 10 grant applications were received for Round 2. Eligible applications were assessed against the objectives of the Fund by the Assessment Panel, which includes community representatives, Council Officers and the Urban Forest Fund Steering Group.
6. One application was ineligible and did not proceed to the panel assessment. Of the nine applications assessed, five applications are recommended to be awarded funding, with four not recommended for funding.
7. Management recommends total grants of \$824,610 (excluding GST) be allocated to five grant applications. Legal agreements, including conditional terms will be established with each project applicant as detailed in Point 1 of Attachment 1.

Recommendation from management

8. That Council:
 - 8.1. Approves the Urban Forest Fund Partnership Round 2 Grant Program financial allocation of \$824,610 (excluding GST).
 - 8.2. Approves the details of the successful applicants be made public following the signing of a legal agreement with the applicant.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 3)
2. Objectives and Process – Urban Forest Fund Round Two 2018 (Page 3 of 3)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Following Council endorsement, City of Melbourne will enter into formal partnership arrangements with the five successful applicants. The arrangements will include project milestones, payment structures, quality standards, maintenance, public access requirements, liability and a requirement for the project to remain in place for at least five years following completion. Legal advice will be sought as required.

Finance

2. The proposed allocation of funds to Round 2 grants is consistent with sustainable financial management of the Urban Forest Fund.
3. The total recommended funding allocation for Round 2 grants is \$824,610 (excluding GST).
4. Successful applicants will receive grant payments in instalments, as specified in each partnership agreement, and subject to demonstration that agreed milestones have been met.

Conflict of interest

5. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report. No member of the grant Assessment Panel declared any direct or indirect interest in any of the applications submitted for funding.

Occupational Health and Safety

6. Greening and access to green space has been shown to have significant benefits for health and wellbeing. The Urban Forest Fund increases greening throughout the city for the benefits of employees and the broader community.

Stakeholder consultation

7. The Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee provided input into the assessment matrix used to score the applications. Three members of the Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee participated in the assessment of applications and the Assessment Panel recommendations have been shared with the broader Committee.

Relation to Council policy

8. The Fund grant program delivers key actions as outlined in Council endorsed strategies, including the Urban Forest Strategy, Nature in the City Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Environmental sustainability

9. Environmental sustainability is a key driver for the Fund, with a specific focus on improving urban ecosystems. Applicants were scored on a range of environmental criteria, including stormwater capture, biodiversity benefits, urban heat amelioration and tree canopy cover.

Attachment 2: Objectives - Urban Forest Fund Round 2 2018

Application Criteria

To be eligible to apply for Round 2 of the UFF Partnership Program, applications needed to conform to the following criteria:

- Be primarily focused on creating new green infrastructure
- Have demonstrated community benefits
- Have demonstrated environmental benefits
- Be located within the City of Melbourne municipal area
- Be visible from the public realm or be regularly accessed by a large number of people
- Have a clear plan for long-term maintenance
- Be completed by May 2020
- Have determined if a planning permit is required, and if so, a permit application must have been submitted.
- Be located on land owned by the applicant or, where greening is to take place on private property that is not owned by the applicant, a secured lease is required for at least five years and written consent must be provided by the building owner.

The Urban Forest Fund offers grants between \$25,000 and \$500,000, where the applicant must match the grant with their own investment at least dollar-for-dollar.